

# Violence and Other Challenges for the School Bus Driver

It is estimated that more than 24 million students ride 440,000 public school buses each year. This accounts for nearly 50% of all students.

Many of these students have no other option for getting to school

*“On a day-to-day basis, the most pressing concern about safety on school buses typically involves student behavior concerns and associated school bus discipline. But unfortunately, just as officials inside school buildings have learned, school transportation officials are increasingly learning that school bus security and emergency planning is as important as school security and crisis planning inside the actual school buildings.”*

*Ken Trump, National School Safety and Security Services*

# Events

July, 15<sup>th</sup>, 1976/Chouchilla, Ca –

Three young men hijack a school bus with 26 students on board. The driver and the children were later herded into a moving van that was then buried in a stone quarry. The kidnappers demanded \$5 million. The driver and the students managed to escape and the kidnappers were later captured.

March 2, 2005/Steward County, Tn. - Jason Clinad, age 14, fires six shots at his school bus driver at the bus stop, killing her. The act was prompted by an argument over Clinard's use of smokeless tobacco the day before.

November 15, 2005/Mirimar, Fl. –

A 17-year old girl was charged with attempted murder on a crowded school bus after shooting her classmate following an argument.

March 28, 2008/Las Vegas, NV –

6 junior and high school students are shot after they disembark from their school bus, leaving two in critical condition. Shooting stemmed from a fight at school over a girl.

February, 2010, Carmel, In –

Alleged sexual assault takes place on Carmel school bus by senior basketball players against freshman following a basketball game.

February, 2006/Fort Wayne, IN. –

A 10-year old boy passed out Ecstasy pills to four or five students on a school bus thinking they were candy. 133 pills were recovered worth an estimated \$3,000.

# What kids do that drivers must deal with

- Attitudes
- Fighting
- Arguing
- Bullying
- Smoking on bus
- Illegal substances
- Sexual activity
- Throwing objects out of bus





- Weapons
- Vandalize bus
- Come up missing
- Medical issues
- Special Need issues
- Horseplay

# Three Categories for Rules

- Safety

- Order

- Rights

# Issues at Bus Stops

- Angry family members
- Suspicious persons
- Criminal activity, drugs, gangs, etc.



# What puts a school bus at risk

- Number of students on a school bus may range anywhere from 50 to even 90 students. 2 to 3 times as many as what are in a normal classroom.
- School buses often travel in isolated areas, resulting in being miles from supportive response.
- School buses often drop off students in high risk areas exposing students to street gang elements, criminal activity and/or domestic violence.

- Buses travel on a defined and predictable schedule.
- Bus drivers must stay focused on driving the bus, along with responding to weather and traffic conditions.
- Bus drivers often lack the training to adequately address issues that arise.

# The Importance of Driver Training

"School Transportation News, in its November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006 issue, reported the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) called for renewed security training for school bus drivers. In a resolution passed by its members, NASDPTS was reported to call for all school bus driver training to include, but not be limited to, training on personal safety, parental custody issues, crimes (vandalism, theft and assault), hijackings, and possession of dangerous materials or weapons."

From the National School Safety and Security Services

# Available Training Programs

- Dealing with Young Riders – Strategies Training Systems
- How to Control Bullying on the School Bus – Video Communications
- Secrets of the Weapons Violator – Garret Metal Detectors
- School Bus Held Hostage – Strategies Training Systems
- Handling the Parent Contact – Strategies Training Systems
- Assertive Discipline for Bus Drivers – Lee Cantor & Associates
- Gun on the Bus – Pupil Transportation Safety Institute
- The Professional Bus Driver and Student Safety – The Master Teacher

“If you fail to prepare, you’re  
prepared to fail”

Mark Spitz

